

498 EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
EEFORMEK

take very kindly. Zola replied under date
of May 8,
1901:

" I have never consulted the tastes of
the public, and I am
too old nowadays to modify my work in
order to please it. I
am writing these "books with a certain
purpose before me, a
purpose in which the question of form is of
secondary importance.
I have no intention of trying to amuse
people or thrill them with,
excitement. I am merely placing certain
problems before them,
and suggesting in some respects certain
solutions, showing what
I hold to be wrong and what I think
would be right. When I
have finished these 'Evangiles,' when 'Verite'
and 'Justice'
are written, it is quite possible that I shall
write shorter and
livelier books. Personally I should have
everything to gain by
doing so, but for the present I am
fulfilling a duty which the
state of my country imposes on me."

Most of "Travail" was written in 1900, in
December
of which year it began to appear in "
L'Aurore." In April,
1901, it was published as a volume.¹ A little
later in the
same year, the virulence of the Dreyfus
agitation having
subsided and public attention being turned to
the Assump-
tionists and other religious orders, in
connection with
M. Waldeck-Rousseau's Association Bill, the
director of the
Opéra Comique in Paris thought the moment
favourable
for the production of a one-act lyrical
drama, entitled
"I/Ouragan," the prose libretto of which, set
to music by
M. Bruneau, had been written by Zola some
years pre-

viously. " L'Ouragan" was not a particularly ambitious work and the moderate success it achieved was perhaps all that could have been expected for it.

After the production of that piece Zola began to consider the subject of his next book, " Travail," which gave him no

¹ "Travail," Paris, Fasquelle, 1901, 18mo, 666 pages; some copies on special papers, etc. Seventy-seventh thousand in 1903.